

NEW SOUTHERN RECORDS OF THE YELLOW PALMDART *CEPHRENES TRICHOPEPLA* (LOWER) (LEPIDOPTERA: HESPERIIDAE) IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Abstract

The yellow palmdart *Cephrenes trichopepla* is recorded from Perth, Onslow and Karratha, Western Australia. It may have been introduced through the transfer of ornamental palms.

Introduction

The recorded range for the Yellow Palmdart *C. trichopepla* is north-western Australia north from Broome, across the Northern Territory including the Alice Springs area, the islands of Torres Strait, and Cape York to Brisbane (Common and Waterhouse 1981). On the east coast it has recently been recorded as far south as Byron Bay, New South Wales (Petrie 1985).

Discussion

In January 1983 the species was first noted at Karratha, 650 km south-west of Broome. Its arrival coincided with the import from Darwin, of large quantities of palms, the food plant for *C. trichopepla*. For a time it was abundant, but now appears to persist in much lower numbers (A.N. Start, Department of Conservation and Land Management, pers. comm.). In late April 1990, I found the species at Onslow, a further 200 km south-west of Karratha. Larvae and pupae were common on palms in the town.

On 24 September 1989, I collected an adult male *C. trichopepla* at Wanneroo Heights, Wanneroo, 25 km north of Perth. Another male and a female were subsequently taken at the same locality on 7 April 1990. The site is adjacent to a semi-rural subdivision where several species of introduced ornamental palms are well established and new plants continue to be introduced. These are the first records of this skipper from Perth.

It is probable that *C. trichopepla* reached Perth in the same manner as Karratha and will soon become established. This has already happened with *C. augiades sperthias*, which it has been suggested, was introduced to Wanneroo on palms from Queensland in 1977, and is now plentiful throughout the Perth metropolitan region (Hutchison 1983). There is an interesting parallel in eastern Australia, where *C. trichopepla* has recently been found as far south as Byron Bay, New South Wales. Petrie (1985) suggests that the range of *C. trichopepla* may well be extending due to the widespread planting of ornamental palms.

The specimens of *C. trichopepla* from Wanneroo, and examples from Karratha and Onslow, are housed at the W.A. Wildlife Research Centre, Wanneroo.

Acknowledgement

Mr Bob Hay, of Perth, kindly confirmed the identification of the specimens collected at Wanneroo.

References

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